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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7481
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1530
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4871
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/Qatar, Syria/Brazil, Golan, Lebanon, Iraq,
Palestinian Territories (1/25)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on Jan. 25 reported that President Asad returned to Damascus after a short visit to Qatar on Jan. 24, where he reviewed with Qatari Prince Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani developments in the region, especially in Iraq and Palestine. The leaders also reviewed bilateral economic relations, including investment projects that Qatar will have in Syria.

On Syrian-Brazilian relations, papers reported that Renan Calheiros, President of the Federal Senate of Brazil, hailed Syria's principled positions and its efforts to avert tension and conflicts in the region more particularly in Iraq. Meeting Minister of Information Mohsen Bilal on Jan. 23, Senator Calheiros emphasized his country's backing for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. He warned against the danger of the language of threats used by the US Administration against a number of Arab countries. The sides also discussed their bilateral relation and means of boosting cooperation.

On Lebanon, papers reported that Hizbollah SecGen Hasan Nasrallah announced on Jan. 24 that "the Lebanese opposition is able to overthrow the government tomorrow, but what has prevented it from doing so is its commitment to civil peace." "If the opposition wanted to topple the government, it would have done so on the first day of its protests," Nasrallah added in a speech broadcast by Lebanese al-Manar TV. He challenged the Lebanese government to hold a general strike as successful as the opposition's on Jan. 23.

Papers also reported that the Committee of Prisoners and Detainees, of the group, the Syrian Golan Rally, condemned brutal Israeli practices against Arab prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails. In a statement issued Jan. 24, the Committee called on international legal and humanitarian organizations, particularly those affiliated with the United Nations, to follow up the situation of Syrian prisoners in Israeli prisons and exert efforts to ease the suffering resulting from premeditated Israeli negligence. The statement urged such organizations to put pressure on Israeli authorities to abide by international conventions.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad and Emir Hamad of Qatar discuss the situation in Iraq and Palestine and bilateral relations" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/25)

"The Committee of Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli jails calls on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to ease their suffering" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/25)

"Meeting with Information Minister Bilal, Chairman of the Brazilian Senate: Syria's efforts aim at saving the region from more tension" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/25)

"AL SecGen Amr Mousa warns against dangerous US threats and calls for resuming talks on all tracks. Mousa: Dialogue with Syria and Iran is the key to solution" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/25)

"Hizbollah SecGen Nasrallah: The Lebanese opposition is capable of toppling the government" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/25)

"Israeli occupation plans to expand settlements in the West Bank and to bring a European contingent to run Gaza. A Palestinian martyred in Gaza. Wide-scale attacks in the West Bank" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/25)

"A crisis in Israel: Israeli President Katsav refuses to resign. A mutiny within Kadima against Olmert" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/25)

"Eight US soldiers killed in Iraq. A draft resolution in the Congress: Sending more troops to Iraq is incompatible with US national interests" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/25)

"President Bush's State of the Union Address reflects the US impasse" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/25)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Lebanon's Uprising and US Dispute"

Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, commented (1/25): "If US Democrats are serious in their opposition to President Bush's policy and in their efforts to correct the mistakes of the US Administration, they need to break the link between the Bush administration and its extensions around the world, such as Fouad al-Saniara's government and the 14 February team in Lebanon...."

"What is happening in Lebanon today should serve as an additional factor helping the Democratic majority curb the US Administration's influence and political extensions across the world. By supporting the uprising of the Lebanese and their renewed revolution against al-Saniara's government and the 14 February forces, the American Democratic majority can efficiently help stop the involvement of Bush's administration in a grave mistake it has made and is still making in Lebanon."

"The Syrian Gate"

An unsigned editorial in government-owned Al-Ba'th, stated (1/25): "The recent visits to Syria by the Iraqi, Palestinian, and Pakistani presidents and by other foreign officials prove Syria's pivotal role and the importance of listening to Syria's views on all pressing issues, especially on Iraq, Lebanon, and the occupied Palestinian territories...."

"In the past two years there were efforts by superpowers to harm Syria's role and isolate it, and curb its Arab and regional influence...."

"Not only did those policies fail, they also backfired, with Syria becoming the destination for American congressmen and European foreign ministers despite American and French pressure on them and advice to them not to visit Damascus....

"Syria is eager to preserve Iraq's unity and independence, consolidate Palestinian national unity, and support Lebanon's unity and Arabism free from the American-French plans that seek to move that country from its resisting Arab position to the American-Zionist position.... These positions are at the heart of Syrian policy. This policy, which has disturbed and agitated others, has helped Damascus maintain its forward regional position on all files. No settlement for any of the region's issues can be reached without passing through the Syrian gate."

"Six Decades of Criminal Work"

Isam Dari, Chief Editor of government-owned Tishrin, wrote (1/25):
"Successive US administrations, particularly the current administration, are to blame for the chaos, destruction, and tension worldwide....

"The United States is responsible for the destruction in Afghanistan, the massacres in former Yugoslavia, the burning of Iraq, the slaughters against the Palestinian people, and what is happening today in Lebanon....

"Yes, six decades of established crimes against the peoples of the earth. Let anyone claiming otherwise sue us in any court of his

choice. International justice will certainly rule for us and for the peoples of the earth. But we stick to our right to bring the criminals, both the dead and the ones still alive, to the war crimes court, if not today then tomorrow."

Corbin